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Egyptian Long-Staple Cotton

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Paul Hill

EGYPTIAN LONG-STAPLE COTTON.

It Grows to Great Perfection in the Raymondville
Country and May be Generally Planted in that Section
Next Season—Oranges and Figs Do Well There.



SITUATED on the St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico Railroad, forty-six miles north of Brownsville, is the town of Raymondville. The surrounding country, when cleared of the cactus and mesquite, is one of great beauty from the standpoint of a farmer, for more fertile and more productive land can not be found anywhere. Like some other communities in the Gulf Coast Country Raymondville has its "knockers," but it has survived these and it will continue to survive them, for there are those in Raymondville who have faith in its future and who will continue to develop the country and prove to the outside world that what will grow in other Gulf Coast Country communities will also grow in theirs.

Properly speaking, or until there comes a canal, the Raymondville community can not be called a "poor man's" country. This is due to the fact that Raymondville is on the southern edge of the great artesian belt and to get artesian water there an average depth of 1,200 feet must be attained. This requires an outlay of considerable money and the man of small capital who has only money enough to buy a small tract of land finds himself unequal to the task of getting artesian water with which to irrigate his crops. The time is not far distant, however, when this obstacle will be overcome, and already there is a movement on foot to extend one of the great canals to Raymondville, and this can be accomplished without any very great expense as the distance is not far and the lay of the land is all that could be wished for.

Another thing that has militated against Raymondville is the fact that people who have had no experience in farming and less in irrigation have made failures, as they were bound to do, and have then laid the cause of such failures to the soil and the artesian water. That such excuses are far fetched and unjust we will show further on in this article by stating facts that can not be disputed. There is no better artesian water in the artesian belt than that in and around Raymondville, while the soil is equal to the best and will produce almost anything. People who farm by irrigation, however, must, to insure success, know something of the business and they must also know that drainage is as essential as irrigation. The Raymondville

farmers who know these facts have profited thereby and have no cause for complaint. This by way of an introduction, and now something of those who are making farming a success in the Raymondville country.

A mile south of the town of Raymondville is the irrigated farm of Mr. B. H. Frazier. Mr. Frazier came to Raymondville a little more than three years ago, bought land and cleared it, bored an artesian well or two and built himself and family a pretty home. Almost anything that grows in the Gulf Coast Country is now growing on his land, for he believes in diversification. Mr. Frazier raises all kinds of feed stuff and vegetables on his farm, to say nothing of oranges, figs and other kinds of fruits.

But what Mr. Frazier is most interested in just now, and which he believes will eventually be the crop for his section, is Egyptian long-staple cotton, the correct name of which is *Mit Afifi*. He is making his first experiment with this cotton and so far he has met with great success. Through the applications of himself and several friends he obtained two gallons of the Egyptian cotton seed from the Government Experimental Farm at Yuma, Arizona, and these he planted on two acres of ground.

His mode of planting was to lay off the rows seven feet apart and plant three seeds in a hill, the hills being three feet apart. He planted the middle of April and got a good stand. He worked it as ordinary cotton is worked and it grew very fast. He irrigated it once, but the following day a good rain fell and the irrigation was unnecessary. On the 10th of August this cotton was from five to seven feet high, the limbs lapped across the wide rows and it was literally weighted down with bolls, some of which were beginning to open. Up to the 10th of August two good rains had fallen on this cotton and Mr. Frazier was of the opinion that it would need but little, if any, more water to insure a big crop.

This cotton is a long staple, which will make it necessary to send it to a roller gin either at Houston or San Antonio, there being none at present in this section, although next year will undoubtedly see a first-class roller gin erected at Raymondville. At Yuma last year the cotton from which Mr. Frazier got his seed yielded two 500-pound bales to the acre and brought 22 cents a pound in Yuma, according to the Government reports. Sea Island cotton brings a higher price but the yield is a great deal less than that of Egyptian cotton.

Mr. Frazier expects to get 4,000 or 5,000 pounds of seed from his two acres and he already has applications for several thousand pounds more seed than he will be able to supply. He regards this as an indication that Egyptian cotton will be largely planted in the Raymondville country next year. The plant is very hearty and some of its leaves are ten and twelve inches across. The seed are small, round

and black and a bushel will plant about four acres of land. In Egypt, where there is no rain, it is raised by irrigation. Mr. Frazier is elated with the success of his experiment and believes the Egyptian the cotton for the Lower Gulf Coast Country.

In addition to his cotton Mr. Frazier has several acres in Spanish peanuts, said to be a better feed for stock than either oats or alfalfa. His crop looked very fine and was planted on the same land that had produced a crop of early spring potatoes and a crop of winter cabbage, making three crops on the same ground in one season. These crops were all irrigated with water from an artesian well.

There are two distinct soils around Raymondville—one a black sandy loam and the other a clay-chocolate. The clay-chocolate loam is twenty feet in depth and seems to be full of disintegrated snail shells. It is a kind of marl formation and is very rich and productive, which can also be truthfully said of the black sandy loam.

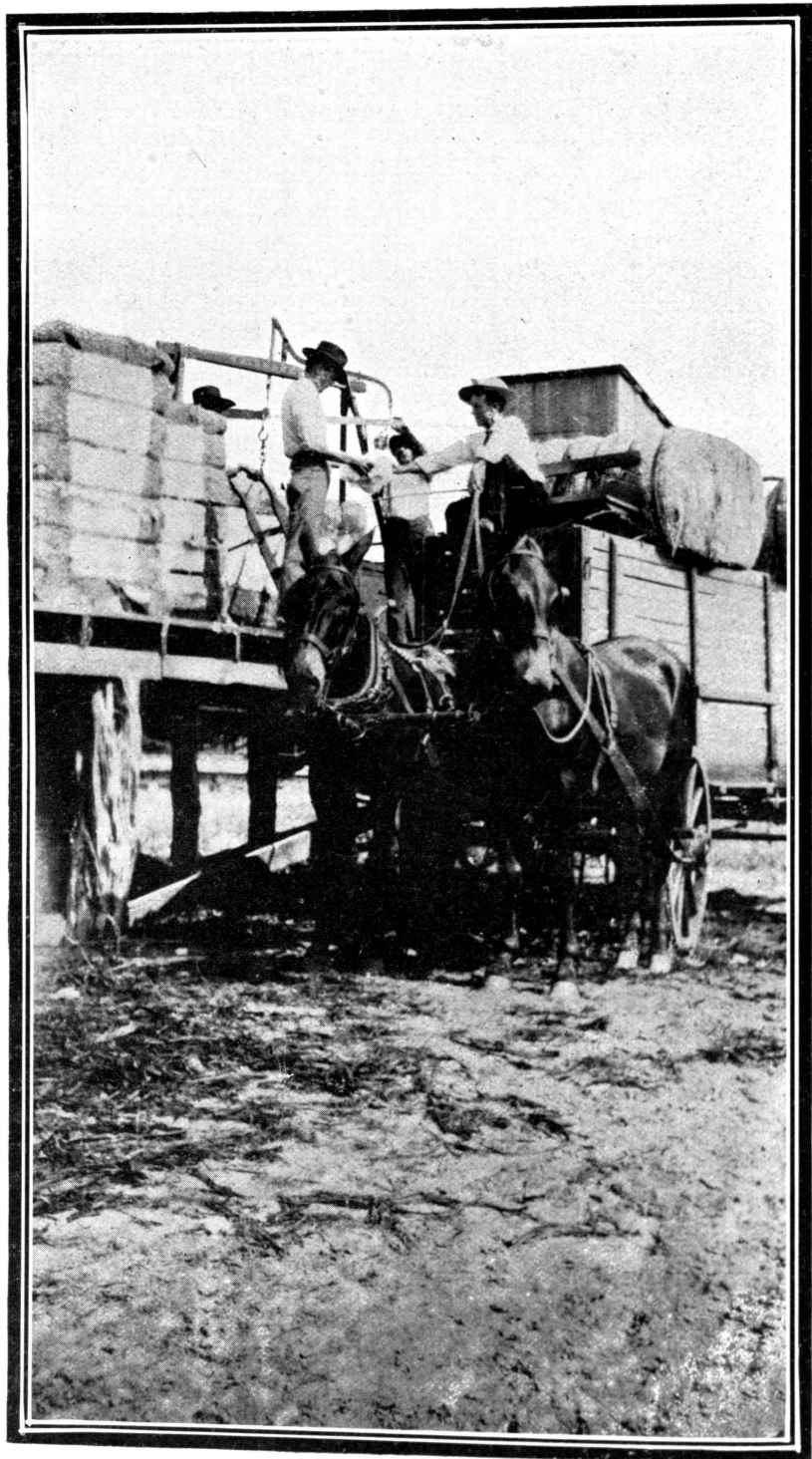
Mr. Frazier has a pretty orange grove, but some of his trees have been affected by a sort of root-rot, similar to that which sometimes attacks orange trees in both Florida and California. He believes there is a remedy for the evil, however, and he hopes to have it overcome in the near future. Only occasional trees are attacked by it, which inclines him to the belief that the trees were diseased when they were set out and that it is not the fault of the soil.

Others who have planted fruit trees are Messrs. Harvey Stiles and R. McChesney. Mr. Stiles planted \$2,000 worth of orange, lemon, fig, Japanese persimmon and pecan trees and date palms, all of which are doing well. Mr. McChesney has an eight-acre orange grove, several different varieties, and his trees could not possibly look better. His trees were only thirteen months old on the 10th of August, and yet some of them are already bearing. He expects a good crop next year.

Mr. E. B. Raymond, after whom the town was named, is perhaps the oldest farmer in the Raymondville neighborhood. He has a beautiful farm on which he grows a little of nearly everything and he thinks there is no better country under the sun for soil and climate. He irrigates with artesian water, has been using it for five years, and wherever his water was properly handled he obtained none but the very best results.

Mr. Frazier has been using artesian water for irrigating purposes for three years with similar results and the same can also be said of both Mr. Stiles and Mr. McChesney. All irrigating must be properly done and unless it is the result will in the end be bad, whether the water comes from artesian wells or from the Rio Grande River.

Growing in the yard of the railroad depot at Raymondville is a fig tree of the brown Turkish variety. It was planted less than three years ago, has had no especial care, and yet this year it was literally



Loading Cotton Kingsville, Texas, July 1908.

full of as delicious figs as one ever tasted. In the same yard is a "Royal Ponciana," an ornamental tree brought from Florida, and which is certainly a thing of beauty. A eucalyptus tree planted at the same time thrives as well as it would in Mexico City, where they have some of the finest in the world.

These all go to show what the soil and water at Raymondville will do, and they also prove that Raymondville has a bright future despite the "knocks" of those whose lack of success is attributed to nothing more or less than their own inexperience and want of proper judgment. "There is no excellence without labor," and to this labor must be added experience and judgment, as farming has become a science, and especially so where farming is done by irrigation.

NOTE—Since the above was written two more artesian wells have been brought in near Raymondville at an average depth of 850 feet, something rather unusual for that section. These wells were brought in by Messrs. Layne and Bowler, who state that each of the wells will have a flow of from 1,000 to 1,200 gallons per minute. According to Mr. Frazier the water from these wells is pure and sweet and altogether free from minerals, and it is also said to be much colder than any artesian water yet brought in in that portion of the artesian belt. The water from these wells will be used for irrigation and will be distributed in twelve-inch conducting pipes.

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RECLAIMING A WILDERNESS.

B. F. Yoakum, in speaking of the work done in the Gulf Coast Country in Southern Texas to reclaim the wilderness, says that the lands there are fully as rich as those of the Nile. He says: "The first cost of machinery and canals ranges between \$20.00 and \$30.00 an acre, and of course is added to the price of the land, which could be bought before the railroad ran through Southern Texas at \$3.00 an acre. After the water is in, the annual charge will depend on the crops, but will probably not be more than \$5.00 an acre. It costs about \$7.00 an acre to clear the land of cacti and brush. With water, two crops of corn or nine cuttings of alfalfa can be harvested in a year. Bermuck onions have actually yielded a net profit of \$350.00 an acre. We hope to make this part of Southern Texas a vast grove of orange, lemon, date and fig trees. White pecans and English walnuts grow well. In time a modern sugar mill and refinery is to be built. Cane will be loaded on cars in the fields and hauled to the mill by electric motors."—*Railroad Gazette Age*.